

Small ornamental plants with tiny flowers for gardens

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Abstract

Seven very small sized plants, viz. *Hybanthus enneaspermus* (Linn.) F. Muell., *Evolvulus alsinoides* Linn., *E. nummularius* Linn., *Vernonia cinerea* Less., *Heliotropium supinum* Linn., *Desmodium triflorum* DC. and *Pilea microphylla* Liebm. collected from sandy soil have been identified for possible cultivation in gardens for ornamental purposes. Their small sized body, leaves and flowers are of different interesting conformation and colour which can attract many people.

Keywords: Small plant, Tiny flower, Ornamental gardening.

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Introduction

People interested in ornamental plantation differ at the nature of their interest—as some of them are interested in orchid plantation, some in cactus cultivation and certain others in roof and balcony gardening with the help of many speciality plants. There is still scope for some special type of plants and it is small sized plants bearing attractive tiny flowers.

The present paper deals with seven plants collected from a nutrient deficient sandy wasteland near laterite soil zone of Paschim Medinipore district of West Bengal. All the plant specimens were collected during October-November 2006 and are preserved by the author. The photographs were taken from their natural habitat and appear larger than their normal size due to magnification.

The plants 1-3 enumerated below were collected from a habitat which get huge water for a few days during monsoon

and get scanty water but profuse sunlight during the rest of the year. It is observed that some very small specimens of that soil look like a miniature of the same or related species grown on well nourished old alluvial soil (as seen in plants described at no. 4 to 7). This may be either due to difference in nutritional status of the soil and adaptation of the plants thereby, or due to some genetic factors. It is also observed that some plants (described at no. 1 to 3) flower throughout the year. This may be due to the adaptation of these plants with the typical nature of soil and climate of that particular area.

Enumeration

1. *Hybanthus enneaspermus* (Linn.) F. Muell. (Bengali—*Nunbora*, Hindi—*Ratanpurus*; Family—Violaceae)

Herb, 2-4 cm long, flower 2-3 mm long, zygomorphic, pentamerous with deep pinkish petals; 2-3 blooming flowers are seen at a time throughout the year on each plant³.

2. *Evolvulus alsinoides* Linn. (Bengali—*Bichamalia*, Hindi—*Shyamakranta*; Family—Convolvulaceae)

Branches 2-3 cm long, diffused, lianous, not rooting at the nodes; leaves alternate and oblong, flower deep purplish, very small (1.5-2.0 mm diam), axillary, cymose, funnel shaped regular and pentamerous; 8-10 blooming flowers are seen on each plant at a time throughout the year^{1,3}.

3. *Evolvulus nummularius* Linn. (Bengali — *Bhui-ankra*; Family — Convolvulaceae)

Branches 3-4 cm long, diffused, lianous, not rooting at nodes. Leaves nearly orbicular and flowers white, small (1.5-2.0 mm diam), axillary, funnel shaped, regular and pentamerous; 6-9 blooming flowers are seen at a time on each plant throughout the year^{1,2}.



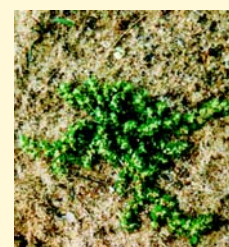
*Hybanthus
enneaspermus*



Evolvulus alsinoides



Evolvulus nummularius



Pilea microphylla



Vernonia cinerea



Heliotropium supinum



Desmodium triflorum

4. ***Vernonia cinerea* Less.** (English— Little ironweed, Bengali—*Joanbeer*, *Kukshim*, Hindi— *Sahadevi*; Family—Asteraceae)

Plant 2-5 cm in height, leaf simple and alternate, homogamous capitulum, floret pinkish and of 2-3 mm diam; 2-3 blooming flowers are seen at a time^{1,2}.

5. ***Heliotropium supinum* Linn.** (Bengali — *Chotto Hantisnoor*; Family—Boraginaceae)

Plant prostrate, scorpioid, branches 2-4 cm long, leaves alternate, lanceolate. Flower in helicoid cyme, very small (0.5-1.0 mm diam), pentamerous, regular with white corolla; 5-6 blooming flowers are seen on each plant^{1,2}.

6. ***Desmodium triflorum* DC.** (Bengali & Hindi—*Kudaliya*; Family—Fabaceae)

Small prostrate herb, stem cylindric, very slender, trailing, branches small (0.5-1.0 cm long) and compact. Leaves trifoliate, flowers bisexual, very small (2.0-2.5 mm diam) with papilionaceous corolla and pinkish red colour, fruit a small pod; 6-8 blooming flowers are seen on each plant^{2,3}.

7. ***Pilea microphylla* Liebm.** (English — Gunpowder plant; Family—Urticaceae)

A small prostrate herb, dichotomous branches 2-3 cm long, leaves are opposite, small, oval shaped and sessile, flowers whitish, very small and short pedunculate type^{1,2}.

Conclusion

The above plants found in less nutrient soil can be grown in gardens either in small flower pots or plots and their tiny flowers may be used to add value to various coloured bouquets.

References

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